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Shall the Facilities of Ohio State University Be turned over to the Engineering and Military Department for the duration of the War?

"Business as usual" is a poor cry when the enemy is coming over the neighboring hill. We must adapt ourselves to new conditions and in case of need entirely change our work and habits. There are times when it is more desirable to shoot, even somewhat inaccurately, than to write an essay or poem with skill."¹

In considering a question of this kind, inasmuch as the government is not confiding its needs to anyone, specific facts and statistics must necessarily be somewhat lacking. The article then, must be confined merely to a frank discussion of the situation as it appears to be from what data could be collected, with an invitation to any who may be interested in the subject to continue the discussion further. In preparation for the article, a considerable census of the opinions professors of various branches of study was taken. Their answers were quite uniformly against such a rad-

ical change being made, usually stating that other branches of study were as necessary to the country's welfare, even in war times, as the engineering and military. It was, of course, to be understood that any branches that could be kept open without interfering with the maximum possible efficiency of the Engineering and Military Departments, would be continued as usual, merely devoting all men and all facilities possible to the output of the government's greatest present need, mechanics, engineers and military men.

No militaristic ideals are prompting motives of this article. On the contrary the writer is extremely opposed to militarism and junkerism. However, it is a known fact that the kaiser's plans include active aggression against the idealistic plans of world-wide peace and brotherhood towards which the college man in general has been struggling, and there can be no hope of fruition of these ideals until the opposing theory of one supreme all-conquering race, living in luxury at

¹Article by T. A. Cockerell of University of Colorado in "School and Society of December 15, 1912.

(Continued on Page 69)

SHALL THE UNIVERSITY BE AN ENGINEERING AND MILITARY SCHOOL

(Continued from Page 55)

the expense of a conquered world is proven totally a failure. Furthermore, but one way is open to overcome force, and that is greater force. Poison must be fought with poison; like must repel like. We must take up arms to banish war from the earth. The question becomes not war or no war, but whether we shall engage in a long, drawn-out struggle, saving and putting off the greatest miseries until necessity forces them on us, or whether, having probed the situation to the core, we shall immediately take every step we need necessary no matter how unpleasant to our present easy going disposition, and at one decisive stroke settle the question for all time to come. Surely, since we must reach the very depth of toil and unhappiness in this time of war, everyone should say, "If it will shorten the duration of this world-wide horror, plunge in!"

Unfortunately, it is a vastly difficult task to turn men from the path of least resistance. To each man his immediate individual comfort and welfare seems of far greater importance than either his own or the nation's future good. Even though such a step in the University as the one under discussion were known to be necessary, it is doubtful if we would all favor it. We must first learn to "subordinate our personal preferences to community interests." A spirit of this kind must necessarily prevail in future civilized life, and it is this spirit that the government is struggling to shape throughout the nation. We must be brought to realize that in "sacrificing to the community, each gains more than he loses in individual rights."²

And the step we are considering is an *immediate and pressing need*. Mr. Jas. P. Monroe, Vice Chairman, Federal Board for Vocational Education, says in his letter to college presidents:

"The government needs, for successful carrying on of the war, trained engineers and trained mechanics, and the one need is seemingly as great as the other. How far, then, ought the college to sacrifice its training of engineers for the sake of meeting the emergency demand for trained mechanics? We hope that there may be the least interruption possible in the work with those of your own students who are fitting themselves for engineering or other technical service.

"Under pressure of developing war conditions, the needs in France for trained me-

chanics and technicians may be such as to compel a large number, if not all, of the technical colleges to suspend summer work from May 1 to October 1, and to devote their whole energy to supplying the call of the government for trained mechanics. We hope, however, that this will not prove to be the case, and that the situation will so develop as to permit the technical colleges performing their full share in the work of training mechanics and technicians."

Under these conditions where even discontinuing the training of the almost indispensable engineer is being considered to make room for the entirely indispensable mechanics, can it be called anything less than preposterous to devote space, time and money to, say, the Arts College?

From France has come the call:

"One of the great embarrassments here in Paris has been, and is, the large number of eager but untrained men and women who have come here and for whom there is nothing really they can do. There is a great demand for expert service, but not for the general worker."³

But, you ask, what will we do with the rest of the students should we take this step? We answer, the student may not have the required training, but he does have the capacity to learn. Turn him from his scattered, misdirected efforts into the lines in which he is now "imperatively needed." Just at the time when food production is being curtailed throughout the country by the shortage of farm labor, the country cannot afford the luxury of permitting every one of the farmers' sons a four-year sojourn—farm agents and agricultural engineers must do general directing work instead. When "the aid of colleges and universities in training engineers and mechanics is imperatively required,"⁴ we cannot turn out economists and linguists by the hundreds. True some of every branch are indispensable, but under the present great stress, our supply of those educated previously to these times of danger to our entire nation's life must suffice.

Ohio State University has placed itself entirely at the disposal of the government and awaits the government's call to action. The University of California has done this, and in addition has established

"school of military aeronautics, training some 500 in an eight-week course, new contingent admitted each week. 45 now being taught in

²Quotation of Dr. Ferrand in article by T. A. Cockerell of University of Colorado, in "School and Society" of December 15, 1917.

³Mr. Monroe's letter.

⁴Article in "Science" of January 18, 1918.

a school of navigation, conducted in conjunction with the U. S. Shipping Board for the training of officers for the Mechanical Marine. A six-week course for the training of chief storekeepers for the Ordnance Department, U. S. Army. Undergraduate men remaining at Berkely form unit of R. O. T. C. A course in Naval Engineering, by one year's special training, qualifies men for examinations as ensigns in the Navy. Courses in Naval Architecture and Military Engineering. Red Cross instituted for home service relief workers. A military information office advises thousands of men how to find opportunity to best serve the nation."⁵

Knowing how great is our government's needs, then, shall we continue to sit supinely until, through the mountains upon mountains of its other present work, it has at last come to this particular subject and acted—perhaps weeks after the need is at its greatest, or shall we immediately take the tongs in our hands, withdraw the iron from the fire while white hot, and strike?

"I think that if the situation demands that it should be done, and the government has repeatedly been assured of our willingness to so do. We are here to serve the country in the best possible way. I think, however, that a measure of this kind is very improbable," says Dean Coddington.

Prof. C. A. Norman:

"There is no doubt that the country needs more engineers today than it did before the war. It would be highly desirable to comb our High Schools and even our army camps for all real engineering talent, could this be done, and see that this talent gets properly developed for the needs of our industries. This means that the Engineering Departments of the universities ought to run rather more than less intensely than ever, although perhaps concentrating their efforts on a smaller number of subjects than they handle now. Every effort should be made to turn out men of real practical usefulness in the shortest possible time.

"All young men do not possess engineering talent, however. Yet the government does not call them into the army before they are twenty-one years of age. There is still a period of from two to three years between graduation from High School and draft age which every young man even now is at liberty to use, and should use to fit himself for the kind of social activity for which he is most eminently fitted. I think that no place could

help him better in accomplishing this task than a good university. Of course if the war is to last for five or six years, and we may soon know that, it might be highly desirable that this university training of non-technical young men be arranged with an eye especially to the military needs of the hour. This, of course, means a great deal of physical culture and military drill. It may also mean long vacations with perhaps compulsory farm work. Aside from this, however, true leadership even during the war means more than ever a clear appreciation of the great issues of the hour and of the fundamental duties of free and liberty-loving men and women. This means that humanitarian studies like history, languages and geography should be given, if anything, more intensely than ever.

"Therefore, while I think that a close co-operation between the war authorities and the universities is eminently desirable, I do not think that the university should suspend its humanitarian activities entirely."

Prof. Henderson:

"See no more reason for making Engineering than Agriculture or Veterinary, since these departments are very essential for successful continuation of the war. Economic factor of faculty dismissal must be considered."

Prof. Williams:

"See no reason, since Engineering is a small part of the school. Discussed ever since war. If necessary for economic reasons to economize, specialize on college. Nothing definite."

Prof. Morris, Civil Engineering:

"All other interests in the University should be subordinated only insofar as they interfere with the efficient handling of the Engineering and Military Departments.

"The Medical Departments should be carried on as usual. They do a great work in the field of war and should not be abandoned. That the Chemical and Physics Departments also are doing good work for the government.

"The girls have certain distinct rights on the campus, and their interests should be considered. The Home Economics Department is being made to develop war-time saving and economy in the girls, and that Miss White is doing a great work there.

"Therefore I am not in favor of abandoning all other interests, but only in favor of subordinating them to the Engineering and Military Departments whenever room or lack of instructors requires such a move."

⁵"Wartime Service of University of California "in Science" of January 18, 1918.

Prof. H. C. Lord, Astronomy:

"As the Engineering and Military Departments expand that the more immediately practical interests, such as Agriculture and Medicine be kept going as usual. As the faculties are needed the more immediately impractical departments be abolished by the proper authorities. Here the question arises as to which are the more immediately practical. Then I would advise all universities as I would all individuals, with this Bible quotation: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, no device, nor knowledge or wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.' This is about the same as the old Irish adage: 'If you see a head, hit it.' Therefore I am not in favor of cutting out departments beforehand, but only as there is need."

Prof. Ray, Mining Dept., says:

"Have school 12 months out of the year for the engineers, medics, vets, and those courses which train men for direct war needs. Let the arts students come for five months out of the year, say from October to the middle of March. Then send everyone not included with the engineers above into the field to help produce food. Let this apply to the High Schools and even grammar schools if the boys are large enough to be of aid.

"Get down to rock bottom and allow only those students to remain who are serious with their work," said Prof. Ray. "Run everything on a strictly war basis."

Prof. Eisenlohr says:

"The idea of devoting the facilities of the University to the Military and Engineering Departments is a direct expression of the militaristic and materialistic trend of thought, which we are in great danger of succumbing to as a result of the present war. We should emphasize education rather than training and the one should not be confused with the other. The war should not be allowed to disrupt and change our whole system of education upon which our higher ideals and civilization are based. I would rather suggest the introduction of more liberal subjects into our present engineering curricula. If the name university is to be justified we should continue with the present 'universal' idea of education."

Dean Breyfogle:

"To limit our colleges at Ohio State University to those courses preparing directly for military success would be a blunder in education. The college man has shown himself efficient and patriotic in this grave crisis, proving a college education to

have been a good preparation for war. After the war the work of national re-organization and guidance will fall upon the shoulders of the younger men, many of whom will not have been to the front at all. The general courses found in the colleges of Art, Philosophy and Science, and in the College of Education, train both in right thinking and in clear vision of our national principles for which we shall have to fight intellectually and diplomatically as we are now fighting with physical forces. Woman as a free citizen will share also in the government. She needs the steadiness of nerve and persistence in a considered course of action which comes through a liberal course in history, economics and allied subjects to be found outside of the Engineering and Military Schools.

"This education cannot be received so well by the mass of our students at any other place as at a State University, owing to differences in cost, in equipment and in living expenses. Failure to provide training for citizens of the state would surrender the control of our future into the hands of those not so well equipped for the task as our university might produce."

Prof. J. E. Boyd says:

"It would seriously disorganize the university for work after the war to close all departments but the Engineering and Military Departments at this time. While the Engineering and Military Departments train students along lines most essential in these war times, the students in the other colleges are receiving a training nearly as essential, to be used in the country during the war and in the reconstruction after the war. It would, therefore, be a very unwise act to close all departments but the Engineering and Military Departments until the close of the war."

Prof. T. E. French says:

"It is our desire to turn out as many technically trained men as possible here at State. By so doing we will be doing our utmost to help our country win the war, as technically trained men are of infinitely more value than men of ordinary education. Under this class should be placed the Engineers, Medics, Veterinarians and Agriculturists. We should at least keep these departments for instruction of students. No especial benefit could be derived from the closing down of the other departments as it would only give a few more men for immediate service. But if these departments continued to run they could help train the Engineers as instructors in their respective branches of education."